

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000687

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NS](#) [PKAO](#)

SUBJECT: TOWARD A MORE OBJECTIVE VIEW OF THE CHAVEZ  
GOVERNMENT

REF: PARAMARIBO 527

1. On the same day that the leading paper carried a front page story praising a Cuban-Venezuelan program providing eye treatment to impoverished Surinamers, another paper carried an article noting that Chavez' traditional supporters are beginning to turn against him. The opinion piece written by one Humberto Marquez appeared in the Dagblatt Suriname (DBS) the paper with the second largest circulation. The paper carries daily opinion columns from diverse international sources.

2. The Marquez article notes that up until last year it was the opposition, the industrialists and businessmen who took to the streets to protest government actions. Now, traditional supporters of the populist President have surprised him by taking to the streets to express their dissatisfaction. It cites as examples demonstrations by Indians against a proposed mining project near the Colombian border, protests by inhabitants of Maracay over the government's failure to respond to recent flooding and support for TV journalist whose program was pulled from Kanaal 8 after remarks critical of the government.

3. Comment: This is the first article in collective Embassy memory to provide detailed factual criticism of the Chavez government. The most Venezuela specific information in the local press comes in the form of lengthy articles from the Venezuelan Ambassador on the merits of the Bolivarian Revolution. Many average Surinamers continue to believe that the recently signed Petrocaribe agreement will help undo the one hundred percent increase in gas prices and the government has done little, thus far, to correct this misunderstanding of the agreement. Venezuela's image suffered a blow (Reftel) after the delegation to a youth congress returned home complaining about their accommodations and treatment and the overtly political nature of the congress.

BARNES

NNNN